

December 14, 2018

Comment regarding MB Docket No. 05-311

(Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984)

To the Federal Communications Commission:

I am a private citizen who uses and values my local, nonprofit, public access cable TV station. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed equating of so-called “in-kind contributions” by cable companies that make it possible for nonprofit public-access TV stations to be viewed over cable systems with franchise fees. This absurd interpretation seems to twist the entire intent of the Cable Communications Policy Act provisions requiring cable companies to provide a tiny sliver of their vast profit margins to ensure the public (trapped, for the most part, in monopolized cable network service areas) continues to have access to local media content developed by and for the community, removed from a commercial profit motive.

In addition, since it is cable subscribers that actually pay the franchise fees, these proposed changes would not only put local public access cable TV stations out of business, but would funnel these franchise fees being paid by consumers into the already bloated profits of the for-profit cable companies, which rely upon many public supports in order to operate. I think this is an outrage.

In my town of Williston, Vermont, I know that many of my elderly neighbors rely upon our local public access cable TV station to listen in on Select Board and School Board meetings – especially in the winter – because it is difficult for them to get to the meetings in person because of health and disability issues. And this is the case all over the very rural state of Vermont. I simply cannot believe that you want to shut these taxpayers out of their local town governing processes, and destroy a system that is working effectively to require for-profit companies that use public assets to operate, in order to line the pockets of cable company CEOs and stock holders. You will be destroying small-town civic life in America.

With outrage and concern,

Anore Horton

Resident of Williston, Vermont